

*POUGHKEEPSIE, NY* – Congressman John Hall (NY-19) hosted a roundtable meeting and discussion this morning to address growing care needs and compensation for aging veterans. The event took place at VFW Post #170 in Poughkeepsie, and a wide range of participants discussed the needs of veterans as they age and the response of the Veterans Administration.

Seated among veterans in the 19th Congressional District and their family members, Congressman Hall listened to the roundtable attendees talk about their experiences and struggles to make ends meet as they cope with service connected disabilities. Veteran service officers also spoke about their efforts to help veterans obtain their benefits.

“It can be easy to lose sight of how decisions made in Congress can impact the lives of everyday Americans, but you can be sure that the stories we hear today will have a real impact on my efforts to address the claims backlog at the Veterans Administration,” said Congressman Hall.

As veterans of WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War age, there will be increasing demands on the VA for care and compensation. According to the VA, more than 12 million veterans are currently over the age of 60, and in the next 10 years another 5 million will reach that age.

“It is vital that the VA is prepared to meet these challenges,” remarked Congressman Hall. “This roundtable helped to shed light on a number of different situations regarding the care of our veterans and helped veterans and their family members gain important information about the benefits available to them.”

Participants at today’s roundtable meeting included Tom Walker, counselor for NYS Department of Veterans Affairs based at the Castle Point VA; Gerry Donnellan, director of the Rockland Veterans Agency; Al Pelaez, a Korean War veteran who came to Congressman Hall for assistance with his backlogged VA compensation claim; Steve Rudyk, a Vietnam Veteran suffering from Multiple Sclerosis; and Eileen Mulhern, widow of Korean War veteran Neil Mulhern from Carmel, who contacted Congressman Hall in October of last year asking for help with her husband’s backlogged VA claim.